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Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation

Division of Professional Regulation

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Illinois RN Continuing Education Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Department receives inquiries regarding continuing education requirements that are to be completed for Registered Professional Nurse (RN) license **renewal by May 31, 2026**. The questions and answers listed below will hopefully provide some clarification. Please note that a complete copy of the Illinois Nurse Practice Act and the Rules may be found on the Department's website <https://idfpr.illinois.gov/profs/nursing.html> or on the Illinois Nursing Workforce Center's website <https://nursing.illinois.gov/nursing-licensure/nursing-act-rules.html>

0. What recent CE requirements are there for Illinois RNs?:
 - a. Starting January 1, 2025 health care professionals who hold a professional license (including Illinois licensed nurses) listed in this Section shall complete a one-hour course in cultural competency. Cultural competency training includes development of a set of integrated attitudes, knowledge, and skills that enables a health care professional or organization to care effectively for patients from diverse cultures, groups and communities. Completion of this course shall be a condition of renewing a license. *The course shall be repeated once every six years.* If a licensee elects to repeat the course more often, the course shall count towards meeting the minimum credit hours required for continuing education for that licensee's profession but no more than one credit hour for any one renewal period. (Public Act 103-0531).
 - b. Pursuant to the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, 325 ILCS 5/4, nurses who work with children in their professional or official capacities *must complete mandated reporter training at least every 6 years*. Such personnel must attest at each time of licensure renewal on their renewal form that they understand that they are a mandated reporter of child abuse and neglect, that they are aware of the process for making a report, that they know how to respond to a child in a trauma informed manner, and that they are aware of the role of child protective services and the role of a reporter after a call has been made. Starting January 1, 2021, if a mandated reporter receives licensure from the Department, they can use the training towards meeting their required continuing education hours.
 - c. Illinois RNs who provide health care services to and have direct patient interaction with adults 26 years of age and older will be required to complete a one-hour course in diagnosis, treatment and care of Alzheimer's disease, along with other dementia types. CE Curriculum will involve how to identify and diagnose Alzheimer's, effective communication strategies and management and care planning. Starting January 1, 2023, this course may count toward the regular CE requirements (Public Act 102-0399).
 - d. Implicit bias awareness training CE requirement for Illinois RNs is a license renewal requirement. Implicit bias is a form of bias that occurs automatically and unintentionally, that nevertheless affects judgments, decisions and behaviors. Starting January 1, 2023, completion of this 1 hour CE course may count towards meeting the credit hours

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required for relicensure continuing education/CE. (Public Act 102-0004
<https://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/068/068011300E05000R.html>)
HB2517 provides that a course on maternal health risks for marginalized groups can count towards the one hour of implicit bias awareness CE required for license renewal.

- e. Sexual harassment prevention training CE requirement. Starting January 1, 2020, individuals with licenses issued by the Illinois Division of Professional Regulation (DPR) that require continuing education (CE) to renew their license, must also complete 1 hour of CE on the topic of sexual harassment prevention training.

The CE requirement for implicit bias awareness training, the CE requirement for sexual harassment prevention training and the CE requirement for cultural competency training may count towards the number of continuing education hours already required under the individual Acts and Rules and does not increase the number of hours required to renew a license.

1. What are the CE rules for RNs who are renewing their license in 2026?

A: Below is an excerpt from the official rules regarding continuing education:

Rules for the Administration of: The Nurse Practice Act: Section 1300.130 Continuing Education

a) Continuing Education (CE) Requirements

- 1) As required by the Act, all nurses shall complete continuing education as follows:

...

- A) Beginning with the August 31, 2012 renewal, **all registered professional nurses** shall complete 20 hours of approved continuing education per 2-year license renewal cycle.

2. During what time period must the Continuing Education (CE) be completed?
 - a. All CE courses must be completed in the 24 months preceding expiration of the license. For the upcoming 2026 RN renewal, all CE must have been completed between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2026.
3. This is my first time renewing my Illinois RN license – do I need to complete 20 hours of CE prior to May 31, 2026?
 - a. No, a renewal applicant shall not be required to comply with CE requirements for the first renewal of an Illinois RN license, Nurse Practice Act Rules: Section 1300.130 a) 4).
4. I completed continuing education hours for my nursing license in another state, will I be able to use those same completed courses for Illinois RN re-licensure CE courses?
 - a. Yes, Section 1300.130 a) 6): CE hours used to satisfy the CE requirements of another jurisdiction may be applied to fulfill the CE requirements of the State of Illinois for RN re-licensure pursuant to the provisions set forth in subsection (c).
5. Are there different ways to earn CE hours for Illinois RN license renewal?
 - a. CE hours for RN re-licensure shall be earned by verified attendance or participation in a program or course that is offered or sponsored by an approved CE Sponsor. Per the Rules, CE may be earned through a variety of ways including but not limited to in-person classes or seminars, academic classes, teaching CE courses or publication.

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6. Presenter/lecturer presentations made to other health professionals on topics related to the certification area may be used for CE credit. Each different individual, non-repetitive 60-minute lecture may be used for 5 CE hours. Full-time educators may not use presentations/lectures that are part of their job expectations- but may use guest lectures and other presentations made outside the duties of their job.
7. How do I know if the sponsor is approved or licensed? Is there a list of approved CE Sponsors and Programs for Illinois RN re-licensure in 2026?

CE sponsors must either be pre-approved per Rule 1300.130 or must have a CE sponsor license. There is no single list of valid CE sponsors.

- a. The list of pre-approved CE Sponsors and Programs is in the Rules for the Administration of the Nurse Practice, Section 1300.130: c) Approved CE Sponsors and Programs

- 1) Sponsor, as used in this Section, shall mean:

- A) Approved providers of recognized certification bodies as outlined in Section 1300.400(a).
 - B) Any conference that provides approved Continuing Medical Education (CME) as authorized by the Illinois Medical Practice Act
 - C) American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) accredited or approved providers.
 - D) Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nursing (ISAPN).
 - E) American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP).
 - F) Nurse Practitioner Association for Continuing Education (NPACE).
 - G) American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), or National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCNA).
 - H) National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS).
 - I) American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM).
 - J) American Nurses Association-Illinois (ANA-Illinois).
 - K) Illinois Nurse Association or its affiliates.
 - L) Providers approved by another state's board of nursing
 - M) Nursing education programs approved under Section 1300.230 or 1300.340 wishing to offer CE courses or programs.
 - N) Employers licensed under the Hospital Licensing Act [210 ILCS 85] or the Ambulatory Surgical Treatment Center Act [210 ILCS 5].
 - O) Any other accredited school, college or university, State agency, federal agency, county agency or municipality that provides CE in a form and manner consistent with this Section.
- b. To look up whether an organization holds a license as an Illinois Nursing CE Sponsor, go to the IDFPR website, License Look Up: type in: Nurse CE Sponsor: <https://online-dfpr.micropact.com/lookup/licenselookup.aspx>, then type in the name of the organization.

8. Are there equivalencies for Continuing Education CE?
 - a. 1 contact hour = 1 CE
 - b. 1 contact hour = 60 minutes
 - c. 1 academic semester hour = 15 contact hours/15 CE

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- d. 1 academic quarter hour = 12.5 contact hours/12.5 CE
 - e. 1 CME = 1 contact hour/1 CE
 - f. 1 CNE = 1 contact hour/1 CE
 - g. 1 AMA = 1 contact hour/CE
9. What academic credits may be used to fulfill CE requirements for Illinois RN re-licensure in 2026?
 - a. Academic credits may be used to fulfill CE requirements if the course content is consistent with subsection (c) (3). CE hours are awarded as outlined in subsection (a)(4):
 - A) College/university courses that are audited may not be used for CE credit.
 - B) Degree "core" or general education credits such as English, literature, history, math, music and physical education may not be used.
 10. If a CE course is approved by another State Board of Nursing, and that course has been completed in the required time period for Illinois RN re-licensure in 2024, will those CE credits be eligible for Illinois RN re-licensure in 2024?
 - a. Yes, as indicated Section 1300.130 c) 1) L).
 11. What if a CE course was taken on-line or through a nursing journal, may these CE credits be used for Illinois RN re-licensure in 2026?
 - a. Independent study, that is approved for CE credits as set forth in subsection (c) may be used, i.e., home study programs, articles from journals, and other health discipline independent study modules. The CE credits as listed on the document of course completion may be used towards Illinois RN re-licensure in 2026.
 12. Will completion of a skills certification course be used towards IL RN re-licensure in 2026?
 - a. Up to 5 CE hours may be earned for completion of skills certification courses. A maximum of 2 hours in cardiopulmonary resuscitation certified by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, Health and Safety Institute (HSI), or other qualified organization may be accepted, while a maximum of 3 hours may be accepted for certification or recertification of Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), or Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) or their equivalent (Section 1300.130 b) 6)).
 13. Will I have to provide copies of CE course completion documents for Illinois RN re-licensure in 2026?
 - a. Each licensee is responsible for maintaining records of completion of continuing education and shall be prepared to produce the records if requested by the Department.

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